Cosmic Consciousness Series No. 1.

IN QUEST OF A SAD-GURU

By

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"ANANDA KUTIR" RIKHIKESH,
(*Himalayas*).

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GEMS OF THOUGHT

1. Thus let me live; unseen, unknown
Thus unlamented let me die; steal from the world,
And not a stone tell where I lie.

Alexander Pope.

2. Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God.

New Testament.

3. In suffering for the Atma comes the supremest solace in our personal sorrows and Its worship is the absolution of sin. To live for It is to lead the most luxuriant triumph of life while to die for It is to inherit the Abode of Absolute Peace and Immortality.

Swami Yogananda.

4. Darkness will hem you round, disappointments will cross your paths, slander will pursue you from behind, but you are to depend on yourself alone. *Sri Aurobindoo.*

5. If any one wants to see God with a great longing of the heart, inwardly feeling and saying: 'O God, I have not found Thee' then the Lord would surely show Himself to him.

Swami Vivekananda.

6 As a husbandman throws away the husks after thrashing out the corn so does an intelligent person give up the study of books after he has attained knowledge from them.

The Uttara Gita.

IN QUEST OF A SAD-GURU

OM

TWENTY SPIRITUAL INSTRUCTIONS.

Wake up in Brahmamurt even at four,
Unlike the sickman who begins to snore.
Sing of Sri Hari and twirl round thy bead;
Unto Moksha real will He surely lead.
Up up, no bath; but take firmly thy seat,
On with the Yoga for half-hour at least.
Keep a secluded room anon holy,
Under lock and key be it kept duly.
Observe celibacy, regulate thy breath,
Fixed to asan sacred hoard up all wealth.
Study Gita, Baghawat, Ramayan,
Yoga Vasisht, Upanishad, sing of Narayan.
Be in mouna daily for hours two,
Else elevate thy soul by sat-sang too.
Preserve the vital force, worship veerya,
O man, always observe Brahmacharya.
Pray dear, do regular kirtan at night,
For know ye not this will ease thy tough fight!
Fast on Ekadasi, live without food,
Or take some milk and fruits, indeed more good.
Let one-tenth part of whatever ye earn,
Discern the begging bowl and drop to learn.
Smoking, meat-eating and drinking liquor,
Simply cramp the mind to elevate quicker.
Clad with Compassion and armed with Love,
Quench devastating Rage, the burning stove.
Maintain a blooming and radiant health,
Walk some miles daily to insure this wealth.
Theatres, cinemas and vile dances shun,
For life is not a sheer slave of Passion.
Live independent life; self-reliance,
Is the ready-reckoner; unfailing hence.
Since desire is the root cause of world pain,
Reduce by degrees all needless wants fain.
Strive well for the glorious Princess Truth,
Graceful and sweet phrases let them come forth.
Should you indeed like to quickly evolve,
To keep a Spiritual Diary resolve.
Fail not to visualize Self's reality,
Swami Sivananda knows no duality.

SWAMI YOGANANDA.

IN QUEST OF A SAD-GURU.

OM Sat Guru Paramatnane Namah

The East—and mind when we talk of the East, we almost invariably mean India—the cradle of spirituality, the stronghold of theology and the sweet home of religion, has had the proud privilege of having produced men, who by their own sheer industry and perseverence have built pedestals for themselves and monuments to posterity in almost every walk of life. Does there live a man, nay, a child, who does not know that giant-moralist, Mr. Gandhi ? Is there a scholar who has obliterated from the surface of his mind the late lamented Lokamanya Bala Gangadhara Tilak of hoary memory ? Can there breathe a soul who was not moved to righteous tears by the sonerous thunders of Sir Surendranath Banerji ? Nay, does there live a poet or a philosopher who has failed to appreciate and adore the venerable Tagore ? But I must admit that while greatness in the vast majority of cases comes by one's own laborious and tireless efforts in other walks of

life, yet in the field of spirituality and religion, saints are born—not made! One such luminary is the illustrious saint of Ananda Kutir, the subject of my sketch and the object of my adoration.

In the life of every sane man or woman there comes a time, when fed up with all mundane pleasures, tired of the dull rotundity of eating, drinking and sleeping, goaded by an insatible thirst for the why and wherefore of life, he relinquishes his all, seeks the wisdom of sages, philosophers and theologians, knows the Truth for himself and unravels the mystery of the world. Coming as I do under the self-same category, I approached the sacred Himalayan retreat of Sri Swami Sivananda on the week-day on which, by a strange coincidence, this Sad-Guru and his future disciple (the author) came into this world.

As I wended my way towards his hermitage with faltering steps and palpitating heart, I found it fenced securely all round and the doors and windows shut. Taking courage in both hands, I sat underneath a margosa tree with wistful eyes and keen longing to see him. I waited and

waited. It was of no avail. My patience, as it were, was over-taxed. Yet no trace of human flesh! I stood on my legs, took one last and all-absorbing look of the thrice blessed spot, and coughing once or twice, bade adieu both to the hermitage and its venerable occupant, if ever there was one as such. But to my great astonishment and dismay, I saw the doors ajar and lo! there stood a tall and stately figure clad in orange robe, his face wreathed all in smiles. His very sight convinced me of a great future for I did not doubt that it was my Beloved Lord Krishna who had come in human form to give me darshan and that I was an eligible citizen to that much talked of 'kingdomof God.' In a soft, gentle and melodious voice, he graciously asked what he could do for me. But that was only a formality. For I knew that this great Yogi had delved deep into my heart's core. Bowing low and standing on bended knees and folded hands, I invoked in my silent heart my Beloved Deity to besprinkle His Grace upon me. And the Grace did rain as a positive proof whereof I had an easy entrance to the holiest of the holy caves and an honoured place at the lotus-like feet of

my Lord! Who could have not observed the spiritual magnificance of his life, the unfathomable depth of kindness, love and compassion and the glowing countenance heralding Joy, Light and Peace! Whose organs of sight were not robbed of their ligitimate right by the sparkling and lustrous eyes of the great Yogi? What mortal can resist the influence of his irresistable magnetism? None, dear reader, none! When I think of him, my hairs stand on end, my voice falters, and I become spell-bound! Who can imagine the glory of Siva! Glory to Siva's glory!

Having lived eversince for a considerable length of time and sat at his sacred feet in the true spirit of ancient wisdom, I may be pardoned for writing these few pages and allowed to discharge my responsibility to God and to you; and I earnestly feel, that, however unfortunate my choice of words may be, my heart is right towards you and that every line is penned in the fullest and deepest conviction of its eternal truth.

One of the striking features, the ripe fruit of a remarkable spirituality and religionism in the interesting life of Siva is the rare saintliness

of his life that will not fail to captivate even the most cursory observer. That feeling of being in a wider life than that of this world's selfish interests; that conviction, not merely intellectual, but, as it were, sensible, of the existence of God; that willing and spotless Self-surrender to His Will; and the consequent joy and peculiar freedom are some of the fundamental inner conditions of his genuine saintliness. For he seems to feel an enveloping friendliness about his person that becomes manifest the moment the ignoble and timid garb of fear is cast off from one's life and the quite indescribable and inexplicable feeling of inner security, which one can only feel, and once felt, one can never forget, is experienced.

Far more interesting aspect that relegated my imagination to realms of awe and amazement is the purity of his life! It is universally known how soon a saintly man becomes sensitive to inner inconsistencies and discords. The occupation and objects of his mind are so harmoniously attuned to the special spiritual excitement that is now its key-note, that whatever smells unspiritual and obnoxious becomes totally repugnant to the soul whose pure waters are tainted. And

mixed with this superior moral sensibilities, there is also an ardor for sacrifice for the Beloved Deity's sake of everything unworthy of him. More often than not, this spiritual ardor is so supreme that purity is achieved at one royal and master-stroke. This scrupulosity of purity is, it must be admitted, carried to a fantastic extreme by the Sage of Ananda Kutir.

Siva's great delight is undoubtedly in singing the glory and sacred Name of the Lord. Endowed with a rich and melodious voice and versed in music he has inspired the most sceptical scoffers and pitiable unbelievers to sing and dance to the utter amazement of their kith and kin. No wonder then he has earned for himself the immortal name of "Sankirtan Samrat." "A devotee of Para Bhakti" he once began in a strain of divine ecstacy, "sees the Lord everywhere and in everything. How can he have even the slightest dislike for any creature on earth? He radiates abundant joy, love and peace towards A to Z. He is a real Jivan Mukta."

Ceaseless invitations for all parts of the country come every day with persuasive requests to

conduct kirtans and spread the Glory of the Lord. One of his admirers writing to him: "My Lord, in a week you have spiritualised the whole of Sitapur with vibrations of Ram and OM. Your celestial tandava is unprecedented. You know, my lord, there are kirtans and *kirtans*. Oh, how you sing the same name of the Lord in different ways! Really how grateful these people are for having been awakened from their agelong slumber! Glory to the name of the Lord."

Siva has conducted kirtans in different parts of the United Provinces, from the Punjab to Bengal, in schools and colleges, dharmasalas and temples, nay, on roads and thoroughfares. While conducting one of the most successful kirtans at the palatial residence of Sri Lalita Kumari Devi of Mundi, who, to say the least, is one of his royal admirers, he lost all body-consciousness and in a state of ecstatic delight, sang and danced away the whole night and entered into Bhav Samadhi. The All-India Kirtan Sammelan recognises in him "the lion of kirtan and Vedanta."

Siva is a humble servant of Baghawatas and Bhaktas and a great admirer of those who have any spark of divinity in their conduct. He has

often revealed to us that there are three great personalities in India to whom the entire world has a debt to pay. They are Sri Mahatmaji whom he rightly styles "the one perfect karma yogi almost without a parallel"; Sri Aurobindoo Maharaj, that King of Yogis of giant-intellect and superior-scholarship; and Sri Ramana Maha Rishi, a full-fledged Jnani and ornament of Arunachala. Siva is more than convinced that Sri Aurobindoo is destined to work wonders by means of his super-natural powers.

One should learn his first lessons in the true spirit of service only from Siva. Although, I must admit, in giving this opinion, I may be biassed in his favour, yet I am constrained to doubt if there are half a dozen people in this world of man putting into practice what they teach unto others to practise ! Name and fame, to use his own expression, are "sheer blades of straw." How humbly he throws his whole heart and soul in serving the sick and the needy and alleviating their sufferings with Atma Bhav and Sama Dristi! His total freedom from cant, crookedness and craft, his frank, simple and open-hearted disposition are a few qualities that have stood in good

stead in his pursuit of Truth and enabled him to earn for himself a reputation of no inconsiderable magnitude.

Siva is one of the few faithful adherents of that most excellent Ashtanga Yoga of Maharishi Patanjali. He lays special stress on Yama and Niyama, the corner-stone of this sacred Raja Yoga. Non-injuring, non-stealing, truthfulness, continence, and non-receiving of gifts conducive to luxury are the component parts Yama. Internal and external purification, contentment, mortification, study of religious books and devotion to God come under Niyama. Unless the heart is purified, Dharana, Dhyana and Samadhi will be only drifting into unchartered seas with no aim or programme. That samadhi will automatically follow one who has firmly and fully established himself in the above two is Siva's unshakable conviction. The absence of the very idea of lust should be the aim of an aspirant who desires an eligibility certificate to Raja Yoga. There should be absolutely no difference in touching a chair, a stone, a pumkin, a banana or a woman! Then of the microscopic minority of persons who take any interest in propogating that most ancient and

the most neglected form of phyical culture known as "Yoga Asanas", Siva tops the list. His "Yoga Asanas" is an eye-opener to the youth of India, nay, of the whole world. Apart from a large number of asanas with illustrations and techniques, the book contains some very useful Mudras and Bhandas with exercises in Pranayama and practical sugestions for the rooting out of diseases and the building up of radiant and healthy bodies. Pranayama not only removes the oscillation of the mind but also destroys Rajas and Tamas with the happy consequences that the body becomes light and elastic.

Siva is unquestionably a Maha Tyagi. Sometimes he is mistaken for a princely sannyasin with lakhs and lakhs in the Reserve Bank shares. It is indeed a thousand pities that some emotional and hasty type of people fail to see in him the utmost dispassion either for comfort or for luxury. One should examine his midday meal consisting of ordinary rice, dhal and bread before bringing this unjust accusation against him. You will simply heave a heavy sigh of amazement and bring home to your mind the truth of the proverb "that the proof of the pudding lies in the eating

of it". What little money or presents come in his way invariably go to meet the dire wants of student-sannyasins and the sick. Even small gifts such as sweets, fruits, almonds and sugar are immediately distributed amongst those that are then available. It should be noted, however, that he does not belong to that cult of sannyasins who reserve these for a sumptuous dinner with the favoured few. Although he has more disciples in India than any other saint, yet he is quite unattached to any of them.

Twelve long years of intense Vairagya and rigorous austerities to perfectly control mind has helped this Maha Yogi to wholly establish himself in Samadhi. Being totally free from any kind of of anxiety or care, worry or trouble, Raga or Dwesha, Kama or Krodha, Siva remains perpetually absorbed in Brahmic Consciousness in the thrice blessed solitary Himalayan caves and also helps the world in a variety of ways. A mere sight of Siva will consume all sins to holy ashes and a mere utterance of the word will suffice to bestow on your supreme beatitude. A careful and close study of all his valuable works is more than

sufficient to a zealous student wishing to tread the path of Wisdom to attain the goal of life.

I now saluate that Sad-Guru who, on account of his being free from the illusion of duality, radiates Light, Love and Joy and prays like a fountain day and night for those worldly-minded deluded souls for their incorrigible ignorance! May there descend into this world a score, nay, a thousand scores of such Sad-Gurus and continue the sacred task of human regeneration !

OM OM OM Hari OM Tat Sat.

OM Santi Santi Santih

7. Better one's own duty (though) destitute of merits, than the duty of another well performed. Doing the duty ordained according to nature one incurs no sin.

Bagawat Gita.

8. Abandoning all righteous deeds seek Me as thy sole Refuge; I will liberate thee from all sins; do thou not grieve.

Bagawat Gita.

9. More things are wrought by prayer than this world dreams of.

Tennyson.

10. Renounce this world. Renounce the desire for Moksha. Renounce renunciation itself. Then you will become That. You will become Itself.

Swami Sivananda.

11. There is no magical pill more efficacious than solitude—silence— to remove the disease of Vikshepa (tossing of mind).

Swami Sivananda.

12 That which is termed as Atma in the Vedas and other scriptures is called by the names of Rama, Krishna and Siva in the Puranas; that which is described as Nirguna (formless) in the Vedic texts has been declared as Saguna (Qualified) and Sakara (Embodied) by various saints and holy men.

Tukkarama Charita.